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ABSTRACT

This book is a collection of essays which provide starting points for a redefinition of American literary history based on a multiethnic and multiracial, rather than European, theory of culture. After an introduction by the editors, essays in the book are: "The Literatures of America: A Comparative Discipline" (Paul Lauter); "Defining the Canon" (Harold H. Kolb, Jr.); "Thoreau's Last Words--And America's First Literatures" (Jarold Ramsey); "In the American Canon" (Robert Hemenway); "The Oral Tradition and the Study of American Literature" (Theresa Melendez); "His Life in His Tail: The Native American Trickster and the Literature of Possibility" (Andrew Wiget); "The African American Animal Trickster as Hero" (John W. Roberts); "Orality and Hispanic Literature of the United States" (Nicolas Kanellos); "Oral Tradition and Poetic Influence: Two Poets from Greater Mexico" (Jose E. Limon); "Oral Tradition in Kingston's 'China Men'" (Linda Ching Sledge); "Archaeology, Ideology, and African American Discourse" (Houston A. Baker, Jr.); "Canonical and Noncanonical Texts: A Chicano Case Study" (Juan Bruce-Novoa); "Puerto Rican Literature in the United States: Stages and Perspectives" (Juan Flores); "Chinese American Women Writers: The Tradition behind Maxine Hong Kingston" (Amy Ling); "Twelve Asian American Writers: In Search of Self-Definition" (Shirley Geok-lin Lim); "Three Nineteenth-Century American Indian Autobiographers" (A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff); and "African American Progress-Report Autobiographies" (Frances Smith Foster). The book includes the following selected bibliographies: "Minority and Multicultural Literature, Including Hispanic Literature" (A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and others); "African American Literature" (A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff and others); "American Indian Literature" (A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff); "Asian American Literature" (Amy Ling); "Chicano Literature" (Teresa McKenna); and "Puerto Rican Literature in the United States" (Edna Acosta-Belen). The book concludes with names and addresses of selected journals and small presses and 18 pages of references. (RS)